

Dear President and Officers of the ILAE Chapters,

Dear Colleagues and Friends

It is my great honor and privilege to be nominated as a candidate for committee members of CAO (Commission on Asian and Oceanian Affairs), ILAE. It is well known that ILAE has tremendously contributed to the improvement of epilepsy treatment and enhancement of epilepsy awareness throughout the world since 1909. I am fully aware of and support ILAE's mission which is to ensure that health professionals, patients and their care providers, governments, and the public world-wide have the educational and research resources that are essential in understanding, diagnosing and treating persons with epilepsy.

In Asia-Oceanian chapter, there are 20 countries which have diverse cultures and different levels of economy and medicine. The situations of people with epilepsy (PWE) are quite different in terms of level of medical care, number of hospitals for tertiary epilepsy care, availability of epilepsy surgery, psychosocial care of PWE, research activities and papers, government support, and etc. As I have served as a president of Korean Epilepsy Society, I have faced with many issues which should be solved (for example; high cost of new antiepileptic drugs, high expense of epilepsy surgery, less insurance coverage of high cost tests such as FDG-PET and neuropsychological tests, high prevalence and low treatment rate of depression in PWE, persistent social stigma of epilepsy and discrimination of PWE, biased reports of media, much less research grant for epilepsy compared to dementia and stroke, and more).

To solve these issues in Korea, I have communicated with 110 chapters of ILAE to gather information about medical environment for PWE including drug use and insurance coverage of special tests such as FDG-PET and have contacted 59 colleagues in foreign countries to combat the media who released a biased report on epilepsy and PWE. With very useful information coming from other chapters, we were able to solve some important problems in treatment of PWE and correct a biased report on epilepsy. So I felt that it is very important to gather the information about the situation of epilepsy diagnosis & treatment including insurance coverage, social status of PWE, current issues and problems of each regional chapter and share those information among different chapters. Furthermore, to solve issue or problem in regional chapters, supports and cooperation from other chapters in CAO and ILAE are extremely helpful to persuade the government and correct biased thoughts about epilepsy of regional chapters. Actually a research data of a traffic accident risk of PWE compared with normal population sent from Prof. Kawai in Japan was very helpful to rectify biased reports on traffic accident risk of PWE in Korea after a big car crash with epilepsy driver occurred in last year. The official supporting letter of ILAE president (Dr. Emilio Perucca) and emails containing the status of antidepressant use replied from 38 chapters of ILAE helped us to correct a unfair regulation of SSRI

antidepressant use for PWE with depression. From January 2017, epileptologists can prescribe SSRI to PWE with depression without limitation in Korea.

To accomplish missions of CAO A and ILAE, I would like to offer the following activities:

- It is essential to gather and share information about epilepsy care level and environment from 20 chapters of CAO A and extending this to all ILAE chapters.
- It is important to compare the status of epilepsy care and government support among different chapters.
- It is necessary to cooperate and develop a good strategy for solving problems of each chapter by sharing information and recommendations of other chapters which are more advanced in that issue.
- To improve the awareness of epilepsy and rectify biased thoughts on epilepsy in each country, epilepsy awareness activity should be initiated by CAO A with ILAE and distributed to each chapter.
- To improve health and social security of PWE in different chapters, more systematic approaches are needed to give them realistic and practical strategy.

To achieve our goal, I think it is very important to develop and strengthen solid international collaborations and share a sense of mission for improving medical and social environments of PWE in all chapters of CAO A and ILAE. I believe “Do your best, and God will do the rest.”

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Seung Bong Hong". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Seung Bong Hong